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REMARKS BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR DAN MOZENA
AT THE INTERNAL ENQUIRY CELL
GRADUATION CEREMONY

RAPID ACTION BATTALION HEADQUARTERS
KURMITOLA, DHAKA

JANUARY 18, 2012

DHAKA, JANUARY 18 -- U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan W. Mozena delivered the following remarks at the Internal Enquiry Cell Graduation Ceremony of the Rapid Action Battalion in Dhaka today:

(Begin text: AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY)

Asalaam Alaikum! Good afternoon!

This could be the most important day in the history of the Rapid Action Battalion.

Today, the Government of Bangladesh and senior leaders of RAB declare to the citizens of this wonderful country and to Bangladesh's friends around the world that RAB is committed to the ideals of Bangladesh and to abiding by the nation's laws and conducting itself in accordance with the principles of human rights and dignity, the very principles this nation fought for forty years ago.

Today, by training and now graduating this class of nineteen individuals to staff the newly-created RAB Internal Enquiries Cell, the government and leaders of RAB make clear that RAB will hold its members accountable for conducting themselves lawfully, using proper, internationally recognized law enforcement techniques and procedures, while protecting the rights of the victims and the accused and respecting human rights and dignity. The new

Standards of Conduct clearly state that RAB members must conduct themselves in a manner that reflects ethical standards.

Indeed, today could be the most important day in the history of the Rapid Action Battalion.

I wish to direct my remarks now to the nineteen individuals who are graduating this afternoon from an intensive five-week training program focused on how an effective law enforcement entity conducts itself to the maximum benefit of the people by following the law and respecting the rights of the very citizens it is sworn to protect. As I mentioned, these nineteen individuals will staff the RAB's newly created Internal Enquiry Cell, which is charged with holding all members of RAB accountable for their conduct.

Esteemed graduates, Bangladesh was created four decades ago by a generation of heroes, heroes who manifested deep courage and made great sacrifices to uphold the rights and dignity of the Bangladeshi people by creating a free and independent Bangladesh. Their undertaking was difficult and challenging to the extreme.

As you undertake your new responsibilities in the Internal Enquiry Cell, I urge you to remember the heroes of 40 years ago, and prepare yourself to manifest deep courage as you undertake the difficult and challenging task that lies ahead.

As members of the Internal Enquiries Cell, you may be subject to great pressure. You may be told to look the other way when someone takes justice into his own hands, making a travesty of the laws of the nation and Bangladesh's obligations to respect the rights of its citizens, victims and accused alike.

Some may tell you that street justice is better than no justice. Do not be seduced by expediency. You have studied and know well the importance of holding those fulfilling a police function accountable to the nation's laws and values; otherwise, these forces can destroy those they are supposed to protect.

Any organization of professionals must be able to discipline those who do not live up to the ideals of that organization and the nation as a whole. Some past excesses have tainted RAB's considerable successes in fighting terrorism and criminality. You are the key to bringing that chapter of RAB history to a close and to opening a new chapter, one in which RAB members conduct themselves as law enforcement professionals who are dedicated to service to the people

by according them true security by enforcing the laws of the nation in accordance with the nation's constitution, laws, and obligations to respect the rights and dignity of the people.

The government and leaders of RAB have given their full support to the creation of the Internal Enquiry Cell and to your training for manning this new cell. I trust that this support will continue undiminished as you undertake your new duties. This Cell provides RAB a dedicated internal investigation unit, a new system for receiving, logging in and responding to citizen complaints. RAB now has a Standards of Conduct policy where none existed before. RAB now has clear Use of Force regulations, which all members of RAB are required to sign. Standard Operating Procedures are now in place for the effective operations of the Cell.

All these new structures and procedures are good, and they offer great promise for a better and more effective RAB, one of professionalism at the highest standard, one in which all Bangladeshi citizens can take great pride. But structures and procedures themselves are not sufficient to effect change. Implementation of the Cell's structures and procedures is the key to a RAB that fully respects the rights and dignity of the nation's citizens.

This is where you, today's graduates, play a critical role. This is your opportunity to manifest deep courage as you undertake the difficult task of holding all RAB members accountable to the highest standards.

As I look at these new professionals who are about to embark on a most difficult mission, I am proud that my government with the full support of the Government of Bangladesh and the senior leaders of the Rapid Action Battalion was able to assist with the creation of this new Internal Enquiries Cell and with the training of the nineteen individuals who are now graduating. I especially wish to acknowledge the work of American law enforcement expert Tim Teal, who has worked directly with RAB since last September.

I truly believe that today could prove to be the greatest day in the history of the Rapid Action Battalion.

(End text)

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